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Daily Environment Report

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Leading the News

Chemicals

Arkema Blasts Highlight Safety Agency Facing Ax Under Trump

A federal agency that could unravel why Arkema's Texas chemical plant exploded after Hurricane Harvey is a tiny office with 40 employees that the Trump administration has proposed to kill.

Chemicals

Harvey Responders Say They Were Sickened by Arkema Plant Blaze

Police officers sickened by fumes from explosions at an Arkema SA chemical plant near Houston accused the company in a lawsuit of not warning them about toxic chemicals that left them vomiting and unable to catch their breath.

Hazardous Waste

Flooded Houston Retailers Face Hazardous Waste Disposal Challenges

Many retailers and other local businesses in Houston damaged by Hurricane Harvey are facing a critical challenge in disposing of hazardous waste, and government agencies are offering little regulatory relief.

Superfund

Irma Could Hit 22 Superfund Sites

The EPA is stopping all clean up work at Florida Superfund sites in preparation for Hurricane Irma as it makes its way toward the peninsula.

News

Air Pollution

China Proposes First Public Pollution Disclosure Requirement

China's major manufacturers for the first time would have to publicly disclose emissions of sulfur dioxide, nitrogen oxides, and other nationally regulated pollutants under a proposal by the Ministry of Environmental Protection.

Chemical Conventions

Rising Chemical Export Requests Could Spur Delays, EU Agency Says

The addition of new chemicals under an international export convention is challenging the European Chemicals Agency with a rising tide of export requests, potentially causing delays for chemicals companies.

Chemicals

Tribes Urge EPA Review of Five Chemicals Found in Landfills

Native American tribes want the EPA to examine how five potentially problematic chemicals end up in open landfills and whether that means the substances should be regulated.

Climate Policy

EU Firm on Climate Pledges Despite U.S. Withdrawal From Pact

Full implementation of the 2015 Paris climate accord should be advocated by the European Union at the forthcoming UN climate summit despite U.S. President Donald Trump's decision to pull out of the agreement, the European Parliament's environment committee decided Sept. 7.

Climate Regulation

Clean Power Plan Repeal Proposal Coming This Fall, EPA Says

The long-awaited proposal to repeal the Clean Power Plan is coming this fall, according to the EPA.

Contribution

Food Additive Maker's Superfund Complaint Too Skimpy

Emerald Kalama Chemical didn't include sufficient facts in its Superfund complaint to put a biosolids recycler on notice of the claims against it, the Western District of Washington ruled (Emerald Kalama Chem., LLC v. Fire Mountain Farms, Inc., 2017 BL 313963, W.D. Wash., No. 17-cv-5472, 9/6/17).

Cost Recovery

Ruling Sinks Shipyard's Superfund Claims

Passive migration of benzene from a former steel mill to an adjoining shipyard, with no "active" conduct by the mill's current owners, doesn't make them liable for a "disposal" under Superfund, the District of Maryland ruled (SPS LP v. Sparrows Point, LLC, 2017 BL 313775, D. Md., No. 14-cv-00589, 9/6/17).

Energy

Correction

The article "Rule Expediting Small Natural Gas Exports May Have Limited Impacts" dated Sept. 5 has been corrected to say that applicants cannot export more than 0.14 billion cubic feet per day of natural gas in order to qualify for the expedited approval process offered to small-scale natural gas exporters.

Energy

Energy Regulator Nominees Back Technology-Neutral Stance

Republican and Democratic nominees for the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission agreed

that the agency should be technology neutral when it comes to regulating electric power generation, differing from a pro-coal stance of the current FERC chairman.

Energy

Trump's Trade Barrier Push Threatens U.S. Energy Profits, Critics Say

Trade expansion poses the biggest potential boon to U.S. energy companies, yet the Trump administration's rhetoric threatens that prospect, said several speakers at an event to discuss NAFTA renegotiations.

International Climate

Democrats' Last-Ditch Effort to Aid Climate Fund Falls Short

A last-ditch Democratic effort to restore U.S. spending for a United Nations climate fund was narrowly repelled by Republican Senate appropriators Sept. 7 in a major step for President Donald Trump's campaign to zero out international aid to address climate change.

Mining

Chilean Court Order on Wetlands Impacts May Shut Kinross Mine

The future of Kinross Gold's mining operations in northern Chile could depend on whether the Canadian company successfully appeals a court decision limiting the amount of water it can extract from wells near sensitive wetlands.

Mining

Rare Earth Metals Electrified by China's Illegal Mining Clean-Up

Rare earth metals are booming again as a clampdown on wildcat miners in China crimps supply in the world's biggest producer, while the clean energy boom bolsters their use in everything from electric vehicles to wind turbines.

Motor Vehicles

Ontario to Pick Up Tab for Low-Carbon Commercial Trucks

Ontario businesses that lease or buy vehicles with low carbon dioxide emissions are eligible for rebates of up to 50 percent as part of the province's C\$170 million (\$140 million) incentives package.

Natural Resources

Interior Nominee Seeks Collaboration on Land Management

A nominee for a top role managing energy and other federal land resources said he would collaborate with state, local, tribal, private, and environmental advocacy interests to try to smooth out land management policies.

Pesticides

France Ready to Vote 'No' on EU's Glyphosate Renewal Plan

France will not support a proposal extending the European Union's authorization of glyphosate through 2027 and will work with farmers to find alternatives to the herbicide, according to the prime minister's office.

Renewable Energy

Brazil's Rattled Wind Power Supply Chain Looks Ahead

Suppliers in Brazil are hoping the upcoming energy auctions will kick-start a jittery wind-power sector that's trying to deal with the country's worst recession in decades, officials from several companies told Bloomberg BNA.

Renewable Energy

China Eyes 707 Megawatts of Pilot Wind Farms Free of Subsidies

China, the world's biggest clean-energy investor, selected 707 megawatts of wind power pilot projects that will receive the same subsidy-free payment for electricity as coal plants.

Renewable Energy

South Korea Pours Millions Into Building Solar Panels on Landfills

Landfills are not just for garbage anymore. At least not in South Korea where the government and a landfill operator are coordinating to place solar power facilities at four disposal sites.

Trade Policy

Buoyed by WTO Ruling, Argentina Seeks U.S. Biodiesel Duties Deal

Argentina is negotiating a "price-volume" deal with the U.S. that could suspend preliminary antidumping duties, a Foreign Ministry official said Sept. 7.

Vehicle Fuels

U.S. Ethanol Industry Asks Trump to Intervene in Brazil Dispute

U.S. ethanol producers will ask the Trump administration to intervene in a trade dispute with Brazil as tensions between the industry and foreign competitors continue to escalate.

Wyoming Natural Resource Data Collection Laws Target Free Speech

A challenge to a pair of Wyoming laws that restrict the ability to collect natural resource data on public lands was reinstated by the U.S. Court of Appeals for the Tenth Circuit (*Western Watersheds Project v. Michael*, 2017 BL 314483, 10th Cir., No. 16-cv-8083, 9/7/17).

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